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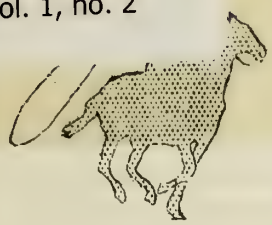

THE MONTANA ROUNDUP

OF INDUSTRIAL HEALTH BRIEFS

Montana State Board of Health
W. F. Cogswell, M.D., Executive Officer

Division of Industrial Hygiene
Dohrman H. Byers, Director

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SILICOSIS COSTS US

Have you ever considered the dollars and cents cost of silicosis to the taxpayers of Montana? The following facts and figures from the biennial report of the State Department of Public Welfare may be an "eye opener" to you. During the 1942-1943 fiscal year, $117,906.00 in benefits were paid to individuals suffering from silicosis. In 1943-1944, the amount paid was $129,690.00, an increase of $11,784.00. These sums are exclusive of administration, transportation, and examination costs. This year, Montana's 29th Legislature appropriated $135,000.00 per year for the silicosis assistance payment program during the next biennium. Thus, in the next two years, the taxpayers of Montana will pay more than one-quarter of a million dollars tribute to silicosis.

The average number of persons receiving aid for the fiscal year 1942-1943 was 328. The next year this number reached 360. As of March 1, 1945, 369 individuals were certified and eligible to receive the payment of $30.00 per month, a total of $11,070.00 for one month. We might expect that with present day knowledge and methods of control, this load would be significantly decreasing, but such is not the case. During 1943-1944, there were 135 applications for benefits and 94 of these were approved. In this same interval, 97 recipients of benefits died. It seems likely that in the post-war period, when employment opportunities decrease, an increased number of applications may be expected from individuals who now prefer to hold onto their jobs.

Add to the aforementioned cost in cold cash the much greater cost in human suffering, broken bodies and lives, and lost manpower and production, then you have an approximation of the true cost of silicosis. A wasteful cost because silicosis is preventable!

Look about your mine or plant today and see if there are any dusty operations in need of control. The Division of Industrial Hygiene is equipped and willing to make dust counts under actual working conditions; thus, to provide you with a technical measurement of the dust conditions and an analysis of any health hazards involved. Don't guess! KNOW what conditions are in YOUR mine or YOUR plant.

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DENTAL NEEDS IN INDUSTRY

Only 20 percent of the populace receive regular dental care. The remaining 80 percent sees a dentist only when tooth troubles become unbearable. The effect of neglected teeth upon the body is manifold. Arthritis, gastro-intestinal diseases, anemias, skin rashes, toxemias and other serious conditions are commonly found in persons with badly decayed teeth.

To prevent absenteeism due to neglected teeth, it is important that every industrial worker should have his teeth examined and cleaned at least twice a year. Examination of the mouth may lead to diagnosis of a number of diseases occurring elsewhere in the body, such as blood diseases, infectious fevers and dietary deficiencies. Moreover, diagnosis of industrial hazards from certain drugs, metals and chemicals, may follow oral examinations. The lead line on the gums denoting lead poisoning, is a familiar example. Also, tooth decay and diseased gums, combined with continued exposure to industrial hazards, may have a serious aftermath.

Industrial dentistry should be a part of every industrial health program. The minimum service provided in a plant should afford the worker good mouth hygiene and freedom from pain and infection. Additional service may be required by workers in certain hazardous jobs or by workers suffering from acute conditions. Pre-employment physical examinations should include a dental examination with complete X-rays of the teeth. The new employee should be told of the condition of his mouth and of the need for prompt care.

The amount of dental service provided in the plant will depend upon the workers' accessibility to dentists and the hours of service. If a dental appointment cannot be obtained for some time, it may be necessary to give emergency care that will include extraction, eradication of acute and chronic infections, or such treatment and fillings as are necessary to prevent serious complications.

Some of the large industrial plants have full-time dentists on the medical staff. Others employ part-time dentists who see the patients either in the plant or in the dentist's private office. Some plants may collectively employ a part or full-time dentist. Some have dentists for diagnosis only, with patients referred to their own dentists for treatment. In a few instances, small scattered plants employ dentists who operate in mobile dental offices, traveling between plants.

The worker should be made conscious of the need for dental hygiene and for prompt treatment of decayed teeth and infected gums. He should be instructed in the serious complications arising from neglect of mouth conditions. This dental education should be given by the dentist or by the physician or nurse during examinations or treatments given the worker, and through the use of posters, pamphlets, talks and films.

Careful records of the dental requirements of each worker should be kept and follow-ups made to determine if treatments have been received. Re-examinations should be made as indicated on these records.

A well planned dental program will aid in improving the general health and efficiency of the worker and thereby decrease absenteeism and reduce wage losses and compensation costs. Assistance in the development of a dental program designed to meet the needs of your plant, will be gladly given by the Division of Industrial Hygiene of your State Board of Health.

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TO YOUR HEALTH

In order to further dental health education among your employees, the Division of Industrial Hygiene is prepared to supply you with posters and pamphlets. A 10"X 14" poster in color, bearing the legend "See Your Dentist" will make an effective bulletin board display. This can be supplemented by an informative and interestingly written pamphlet entitled "Hold On To Your Teeth". This catchy pamphlet is suitable for distribution to your workers. Address your requests for this literature to the Division of Industrial Hygiene, Capitol P. O. Box 81, Helena, Montana. Consult us for a list of titles of similar material on a variety of industrial health subjects.

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BLOOD BANK

The recently concluded session of the Montana Legislature appropriated funds for the establishment of a blood bank by the State Board of Health. Wartime difficulties of securing space and equipment will somewhat delay the program, but it is expected that the blood bank will be in active service in the not too distant future. It is planned to supply dried plasma free of charge to the people of Montana. Distribution centers will be located strategically about the state. The plasma will be stored at these centers and may be secured from them by properly authorized or qualified individuals. A mobile unit will collect the blood for processing from volunteer donors in all communities throughout the state.

It is not difficult to visualize how the industries of this state may profit from this service. Prompt administration of plasma in cases of accidental injuries will save lives and promote speedy recovery. These factors will yield both tangible and intangible profits to industry in the reduction of human suffering, lost time due to accidents, and compensation payments. The value of these factors to the injured workman is much the same and even more immediate.

We believe that it will pay you to acquaint yourself with the details of the blood bank. As soon as the distribution centers are established, find out where, when, how, and by whom the plasma can be obtained and administered in your community. Make your plans in advance to avail any injured workmen of the health-saving values of plasma.

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CHLORINE

During the past few years, several near fatalities have occurred because of accidents and leaks in connection with the use of chlorine in the treatment of water supplies for drinking and swimming purposes. Fortunately, the individuals in each instance were able to reach fresh air; nevertheless, they suffered considerable physical discomfort for several days before recovering from the effects of their exposure.

In most of these cases, the serious exposure resulted because there was no gas-mask available. This simple precaution has been neglected at most of the installations using chlorine in the state. The cost of a suitable approved mask is not at all prohibitive; therefore, the absence of this essential item must be attributed to thoughtlessness or neglect.

After a mask has been provided, the danger is not eliminated; it is only reduced or controlled. Certain necessary rules of use and maintenance must be observed:

(1) The mask should be kept in an easily accessible place near the outer door of the room in which the chlorine plant is located.

(2) All workmen must be fully instructed in the use of the mask. The use of a gas-mask requires a definite technique. It is not like a hat which can be worn just any old way.

(3) The mask must be inspected regularly and frequently, and any required maintenance or repairs taken care of immediately. The mask must be in A-1 shape when needed.

(4) Furthermore, adequate means of ventilating the "chlorine room" and adjacent areas must be provided so that the air can be rapidly cleared in any emergency and the mask need be worn only a minimum of time during repair operations.

If you are uncertain as to the proper type of mask and where it may be obtained, consult the Division of Industrial Hygiene or the Division of Sanitary Engineering of the Montana State Board of Health.

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is
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Don't give up when Victory is in sight!

Let's Back the Attack
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